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FOR AF/S MUNCY; ALSO PASS TO USAID - DR. MOTEN

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TAGS: EAID KHIV SCUL KDEM LT
SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR'S VISITS REVEAL REMOTE AREAS BENEFIT FROM USG
PROGRAMS

¶1. SUMMARY. On November 28, Ambassador June Carter Perry and
post's Special Projects team visited the District of Mokhotlong
to review three Special Self-Help (SSH) Fund projects and to
meet with Ambassador's Girls' Scholarship Program (AGSP)
recipients there. This visible outreach to an isolated area of
the country reinforced positive views of American development
assistance here. END SUMMARY.

¶2. As part of Embassy Maseru's active Special Projects program,
the Ambassador and Special Projects team (Coordinator Kathleen
Norman and Assistant Malipholo Sepitla) paid a visit to several
past and ongoing projects in this extremely remote and
mountainous area of northeast Lesotho (6 hours from Maseru).
During a courtesy call on the District Administrator, the
Ambassador pledged ongoing U.S. support for outreach development
projects in Mokhotlong, the USG commitment to the education of
young women there and our resolve to help those involved in
HIV/AIDS projects. At this and her other stops along the way,
the Ambassador stressed the importance of registering to vote
and taking part in the upcoming elections as a way to strengthen
democracy, and to empower civil society and youth participation
in national growth and goals.

¶3. The team next visited the Senkoase High School, where 2004
SSH grant money was used to purchase solar panels and hot water
heaters for the girls' dormitory which houses 200 students. The
panels provide electricity for lighting the school to aid in
nighttime studies, and hot water during the long, cold winters
in the mountains. The Senkoase Primary School children
performed traditional hymns for the American visitors, and the
Ambassador encouraged all the students to persevere in their
academic work. She especially congratulated seven recipients of
scholarships through the Ambassador's Girls' Scholarship
Program, and provided each with a gift of clothing donated by
Embassy personnel and private Americans. Ambassador Perry also
distributed U.S. Embassy tokens of appreciation to school
administrators. There was also a review of Embassy books
recently donated and monitored by a Peace Corps Volunteer as
part of the USG's national loan library program across Lesotho.

¶4. The following stop was at "Touching Tiny Lives." This is a
shelter to support HIV-affected orphans, with an outreach
program to assist extended families that care for OVC in
training in nutrition, hygiene and general health support. The
project is run by a local director and two former Peace Corps
Volunteers, and the Embassy grant has provided office furniture
which allows the organization to function as a professional NGO,
and securing basic items for the children and families so
devastated by the scourge of HIV/AIDS in their district.
Ambassador Perry congratulated the members of the project and
the caregivers on their good work, and encouraged them in this
critical line of defense against the spread of HIV/AIDS
emphasizing the ABC model.

¶5. The final SSH project visited was Senate House (formerly

supported by Peace Corps Volunteers), where funds to obtain a phone line, office equipment, furniture and educational materials were provided in FY2005. The Center at Senate House runs a shelter for abused and battered women and provides health outreach initiatives and a wellness program for vulnerable women and children in the district.

¶6. COMMENT: Embassy Maseru is committed to strengthening and expanding its development outreach projects to the most remote and therefore often neediest regions of Lesotho. The Ambassador's visit to Mokhotlong was a successful example of how this is being accomplished. END COMMENT.

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